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## ABSTRACT

Educational research on the social studies since the 1960's, indicating that many changes have occurred yet implying that there is still a further need for research and improvement, is summarized in this booklet. Because the vast amount of research on social studies makes it impractical to report a great deal of it, many of the findings reported here are generalized without citing most of the investigations on which conclusions are based. The booklet is designed to: 1) suggest principles and teaching methods to be applied by the classroom teacher; and, 2) provide a basis for further study and use of research findings. Presented herein is a clear, concise portrayal of social studies in regard to basic purposes, scope and sequence, and content in the latter half of the 1960's and, in many respects, as it is presently. Research findings are discussed as they relate to objectives, curriculum content, methods, materials, and teachers. The section on curriculum content presents elementary and secondary curriculum patterns, status of social science subjects, and multidisciplinary approaches to social studies. Teaching strategies as they relate to skills and inquiry techniques are given in another section. Under the materials and resources section, use of textbooks and other instructional media is reported. Another section deals with teachers and current change in social studies. Included are selected current research and development projects and a list of selected references. (SJM)

# WHAT RESEARCH SAYS TO THE TEACHER

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## Teaching the Social Studies

Jonathon C. McLendon and  
Findlay C. Penix

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# Teaching the Social Studies

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## TEACHING THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Significant innovations have emerged in social studies since the early 1960's. Changes are widely discussed, often planned, sometimes tried experimentally, and occasionally even incorporated into school programs. The rate of change is increasing, both in the proportion of the social studies curriculum involved and in the number of schools participating. This movement toward a "new social studies" follows a long period in which the social studies gradually became well-established in the school program (12).<sup>\*</sup> For the past several decades the field has sporadically but increasingly gained attention, acceptance, and status (13).

During much of the "Age of Research" in education (since World War I) the social studies lagged behind such elements of schooling as reading and testing. Even the limited research accomplished went largely unreported or unread and, thus, little affected teachers (11, 19, 22). During the past few years, however, the rate of research in social studies has jumped, and a greater number of reports of research are disseminated. Moreover, research projects today often involve social scientists, as well as teachers and other school personnel. The social studies now appear at the threshold of an era in which scholarly influence, curriculum development, and classroom practices may actually achieve fuller relationship through research (9, 28).

The now considerable research on social studies makes it impracticable to report very much of it. The authors, therefore, generalize many research findings without citing most of the investigations on which the conclusions are based. A few of the more extensive or otherwise outstanding studies or summaries of research are listed in the Selected References. The research findings reported herein are discussed as they relate to objectives, curriculum content, methods, materials, and teachers.

## OBJECTIVES

"Good citizenship," "economic understanding," "appreciation of the cultural heritage," and "critical thinking" are scarcely ques-

<sup>\*</sup> Numbers in parentheses identify references listed on pages 29-31. Citations often relate to several preceding sentences, not just the immediately preceding sentence.

tionable as desirable goals of social studies. Teachers as well as many other persons favor them. But they do not provide specific, tangible, and practical guidance on what particular students should do at given times in their study of society.

The aims and purposes of the social studies traditionally have been and still are widely stated as general understandings, skills, and attitudes that instruction will hopefully produce. Typically, statements of objectives are grandiose, inclusive, and indefinite, and could apply to all education in general. Such statements commonly lack focus on local variation, identification of priorities, and direct reflection of contemporary social change, and they fail to cite specific values of studying social science content and methodology. Objectives understandably vary little between elementary and secondary social studies, although actual approaches to attaining aims differ markedly at each level. Somewhat more emphasis on personal guidance, the nearby environment, and basic study skills characterizes the approach at the elementary level (11, 21, 22).

Some analysts find in social studies instruction significant stress on objectives commonly stated in instructional guides. Several critics report that the content and method of social studies lessons seem to favor the attitudes of patriotism, nationalism, conformity, and acceptance of some past and present elements in American life as desirable merely because they did or do exist. Still, the instilling of values or attitudes of whatever sort is more widely proclaimed than demonstrated as an outcome of social studies (4, 22, 25).

There has scarcely been time for research to reveal the extent of acceptance of recent tendencies in identifying goals or purposes for learning social studies. Understandings now seem devoted to basic or significant concepts in the social sciences. Skills appear concerned with methods of social science inquiry or investigation. The new attitudes are more apt to stress respect for social science findings and for difficulties in ascertaining solid truth about human relationships, zeal for involvement in a serious search for such truth, and desire for balanced but critical communication of social data and interpretation (8, 9, 21).

During recent years there have been considerable advocacy, some experimentation, and limited adoption of "behavioral objectives." Such statements identify quite specifically behavioral out-

comes that may be sought through instruction (9, 21, 22). Teachers may find this approach valuable at least as an aid in considering more pointedly what learning they desire of students. Some critics, however, protest that highly specific behaviors constitute at best only momentary goals and have, therefore, little value as lasting objectives.

The limited practical use generally made of official statements of objectives implies that educators will need to continue seeking new approaches and means of developing and utilizing objectives if they are to function effectively. Greater willingness by teachers to examine thoughtfully the basic nature of learning they seek to elicit could improve greatly this component of social education.

## CURRICULUM CONTENT

Educators are accustomed to think of social studies curriculum content as subject matter selected from the social sciences. Several definitions of social studies stress those disciplines as the basic source of social studies content. Research reveals, however, that the actual content of social studies lessons and instructional materials includes additional elements. Reports of current events, too recent to have been investigated by social scientists, appear widely in the social studies. Hearsay, speculation, and random or casual statements are sometimes voiced in class discussions. And, of course, some teacher-student communication deals with procedures in classwork and other study (4, 11, 22, 23). The following analysis, however, limits the basic content of social studies to subject matter from the social sciences.

Many speakers and writers on social studies refer—often negatively—to extensive *facts* in the subject matter of social studies. Investigations of content, however, fail to justify the conclusion that social studies subject matter (in textbooks, for example) is largely factual. Rather it consists in greater part of *generalizations* (interpretations, explanations) and *concepts* (terms, definitions, illustrations). One group of investigators selected for social studies a few thousand from many thousands of generalizations in the social sciences. Unfortunately, such statements are too many and, when they include the qualifications needed for validity, too lengthy to be directly usable in curriculum planning (4, 21, 22).

Current curriculum research and development emphasize *concepts*, identified by key terms denoting significant social entities.



processes, and relationships. There seems also a tendency toward more use of selected factual subject matter in current attempts to develop a discovery approach to social studies. And growing stress on social science research methods as methods of study involves teaching as subject matter some description or explanation of ways of discovering "truth" about society. Curriculum research indicates that useful and appropriate content for study of society includes facts, concepts, generalizations, and methods of investigation.

Much recent discussion of social studies subject matter has focused on *structure*. Although this term sometimes refers to any organization of content, current stress is on more effective instructional use of structures in the social science disciplines. The research identifying such structure is limited and often is incidental to larger research problems. But research has verified the commonsense observation that each of the social sciences has a variety of alternative, although overlapping, structures. There is no clear evidence that all structures of a subject are equally valid or that a particular structure of any social science is "the best" for instructional purposes. Research does suggest that learners' recognition of some structure (organization) of the subject matter in a discipline helps them to interrelate many of its elements and thus better comprehend the subject.

### **Elementary Curriculum Patterns**

The predominant pattern of elementary social studies is sequential, proceeding from near to far, or through "expanding environments." Studies in the primary grades usually deal in turn with home and family, neighborhood, school, "community helpers," basic social processes, and local (sometimes contrasting) communities. This sequence continues in grade 4 with studies of the state (or sometimes selected geographical regions of the world), in grade 5 with historical and regional studies of the United States, and in grade 6 with studies of world regions and foreign countries. Curriculum guides increasingly reflect a movement toward resource and teaching units that include elements of social science disciplines. Current affairs often complement such content (11, 21).

Much current writing and other attempts to bring about basic changes express dissatisfaction over present elementary social

studies patterns of content and grade placement. Evidence of rising levels of varied experiences in the backgrounds of most children who grow up in a culture of mass communication and travel supports the need for change. Additional solid support can be found in recent research studies on the interests, abilities, levels of knowledge, and conceptual development of children; these findings imply a need to consider revision of the present social studies curriculum (21, 28).

Several investigations indicate that children's interests are not confined to nearby locales, but often include geographical regions distant from their environment. Moreover, these interests may move with ease from the local to the national to the world scene. There seems to be strong interest in current problems that dominate local, national, and international affairs. Apparently, then, elementary social studies underestimate the interests and information children have secured from travel and mass media (7, 13, 21).

Investigation of children's abilities shows that many from kindergarten to the sixth grade can work with more, or more advanced, social studies content than is usually expected or provided. Children often have a previous acquaintance with many social terms and may have prior understanding of many concepts of time, space, and political, economic, or cultural elements. Better assessment of children's knowledge could serve as a basis for updating content (21, 28).

Existing sequential patterns in social studies curriculum tend to reserve specific content and skills for specific grade levels. Research on learning strongly suggests that the curriculum should be flexible, not fixed, and that it should be chosen in relation to the learners' present knowledge and understanding of the social studies, regardless of grade level.

Most investigations report that units are still the most frequent approach to organizing content and learning experiences involving a topic of study. Units predominate in elementary schools and appear frequently at the secondary level. Typical curriculum guides and teachers manuals consist largely of broad, inclusive unit plans. Such "resource" units provide a wide range of suggested subject matter, learning activities, and materials from which the teacher may select appropriate ones (11).

Recently developed experimental programs involve modifications of the typical social studies unit. The subject matter of a unit is now more often developed around carefully selected statements of concepts or generalizations related to behavioral objectives. Teaching strategies and tactics are designed to involve learners intensively in processes leading to advanced understanding and skills. Inductive learning is emphasized, utilizing such steps as asking questions about the data, posing hypotheses, gathering data, testing possible solutions and hunches, and arriving at conclusions. Objectives related to knowledge and understanding are paramount; however, it is hoped that skills and attitudes involved in the process of discovery will help students grow in ability to conduct independent investigations and to learn for themselves in a disciplined, rational manner (8, 9, 29).

### **Secondary Curriculum Patterns**

The pattern of course or grade-level offerings in secondary social studies has changed relatively little since the 1920's. It has achieved greater uniformity as schools have continued to depend heavily on similar textbooks mostly published for a nationwide market. School systems often have chosen to follow practices in the majority of other school systems.

But continuance of the same course labels fails to reflect that considerable change in specific content has occurred. Each of the main courses has broadened in scope, especially to add recent events and trends, more elements of a social or cultural nature, and, recently, more content concerning non-Western societies. Survey courses have become predominant, and a greater need for selectivity has been felt (4, 11, 18, 22). Research and experimental programs, however, have not yet developed satisfactory and widely accepted selections of content that delimit scope of study and facilitate depth of learning.

Secondary social studies offerings have changed also in additional specifics. Stress on recent events has increased, and interpretation is more evident—particularly as more recently educated teachers have entered the field. Critics charge, however, that the social studies have lagged seriously behind both contemporary social changes and recent developments in scholarly study of human affairs. Limited but significant research confirms that there is a notable lag (11, 22, 25). Research indicates that continual

efforts will need to be exerted if the social studies are to become and remain up-to-date in content.

In secondary schools the social studies lack a coordinated, articulated sequence of courses that is clear-cut, definite, and complementary in its parts. The most typical succession of courses from grade 7 to grade 12 is geography, U.S. history, civics, world history, U.S. history, and problems (known by varying titles). This selection and arrangement lacks carefully examined and explained assumptions. Evidently the grade placement of these courses arises at least as much from historical accident as from more rationally justifiable bases. Research suggests that more coordination among courses is needed but that no single arrangement is "the best" for all school systems (11, 21, 22).

### **Status of Subjects**

Space permits only brief summary of the status in elementary and secondary schools of each subject component of the social studies curriculum.

Elements of history occur even in the lower grades. Most commonly this program includes origins of national holidays, biographical sketches of national leaders, and aspects of local history. Chronologically organized history usually appears first in grade 5 as a narrative of the development of American life. The state's past often gets special attention in this or another grade. Occasionally in grade 4 but more often in grade 6 earlier civilizations and modern times in other parts of the world constitute direct instruction in history (11, 21).

Geographic aspects of the local environment gain at least incidental treatment in the primary grades. Increasing use of maps and globes involves some attention to more distant locales. Fuller treatment of geography normally occurs in grade 4, and it usually recurs in higher elementary grades as well. Description of natural and man-made physical features predominates in geographic instruction (4, 11).

Political, economic, and cultural activities and processes commonly appear in the content of elementary social studies. Units or lessons on transportation, communication, schooling, family life, community, government, and workers of various types are examples of the widespread content of instruction (11, 12). The

material, however, consists most often of narrations or descriptions of group activities. It normally does not include analytical concepts that political scientists, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, and social psychologists employ in their disciplines (6, 7, 10).

History makes up at least half of the subject matter in secondary social studies. U.S. history dominates the eleventh (and sometimes the twelfth) grade and predominates in the eighth (and occasionally the seventh) grade. World history has become increasingly common in the tenth (sometimes the ninth) grade. State history is commonly taught, though often not as a full-year course. Typically, these courses survey the historical development of society through presentation of numerous names and myriad generalizations (11, 18, 21).

Geography appears more often in the junior high school (usually the seventh grade), but sometimes in senior high, where it is most likely elective. The subject has tended toward more stress on social, cultural, or human elements, with occasional re-emphasis on physical aspects. The relations of geography in social studies to courses in earth science may involve duplication, but the relationship is little investigated.

Political science appears mostly in courses called government, or as a strong element of courses in civics or problems. Government is sometimes required, but most often elective for a semester or perhaps a year in the senior high. Civics is typically taught in the ninth grade and is required; problems in the twelfth grade and is elective. Traditional stress on national government is broadening to include other political systems, often by a comparative approach. Emphasis on structure of government has given some ground to greater consideration of governmental functions or activities. The political behaviorists' approach to their discipline seems thus far little reflected in secondary social studies.

Economics has made relative gains in social studies during the past few years. Although scarcely more than 10 percent of high school students take an economics course, it gets more attention than formerly in other courses. A decade or two ago the stress on vocations declined, and more recently consumer or personal economics has given ground to basic economic concepts. Reflecting a shift in economists' interest, secondary school instruction now gives more attention to macroeconomics ("the big picture."

usually at the national level) and less to microeconomics (specific segments of the economy: companies, unions, localities, individuals) (4, 9, 14).

Those social sciences most behavioristically oriented—sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology—rank low in social studies offerings and are rarely required. Anthropology almost never appears as a course, although it is receiving slightly growing attention in such courses as world history. High school psychology courses often tend toward group guidance, and social psychology receives little attention. Sociology is an elective in some schools, and it enters into courses in civics and problems (4, 11).

### **Multidisciplinary Content**

Actual examination of textbooks used a half century and longer ago reveals that the offering of multidisciplinary social studies courses is scarcely new. Older history and geography books often made liberal use of each other's subject matter, as well as of political and economic content. Still, it was not until the 1920's and 1930's that a movement toward multidisciplinary courses was definitely advanced (11, 12, 13).

Multidisciplinary approaches to social studies content predominate in the elementary curriculum, especially in the primary grade level offerings. Despite the clear relationship of many social studies unit themes or topics to particular disciplines, such units ordinarily involve considerable content from several subjects. A class considers communication, for example, with regard to its past development, social functions, economic aspects, geographical elements, perhaps its political influence and control, and sometimes technical factors and personal uses. Numerous other elementary units are treated likewise, particularly in the lower grades.

A similarly broad approach is often taken to a topic such as the study of a state in the intermediate or upper elementary grades. Perhaps more frequent at these levels, however, is an approach that emphasizes a limited variety of subjects, such as the history and geography of an area. But any geography or history course is apt to include significant content from the other subject.

Two widely taught secondary social studies courses make frequent use of multidisciplinary approaches. The courses in civics (or citizenship) and problems draw content mainly from political

science, economics, and sociology, thus providing comparable and perhaps somewhat overlapping subject matter, usually in the ninth and twelfth grades. When a "problems approach" is used in these courses, it is typically applied to a selection of problems that are political, economic, or sociological in nature of solution (11).

The civics course especially stresses government, but both courses usually contain much of economic and sociological as well as political content. A generation ago civics ordinarily stressed the local community, but practice has tended toward more emphasis on the nation. Research has not yet analyzed the extent, nature, and effects of quite recent attention to the urban community, especially in metropolitan area schools. Meanwhile, for a decade or two the courses in civics and problems have declined in frequency as disciplinary courses have gained in popularity (4, 11).

World regions or cultures, approached in multidisciplinary study, have found increasing favor in secondary social studies. Such an approach is becoming more popular in world geography and sometimes in world history. In a few school systems a world cultures course has replaced one or both of those courses. And occasionally a high school offers an elective course dealing with a single region. Instruction on the state and community (in which a school is located) also often is multidisciplinary, though such study is sometimes incorporated into U.S. history or civics, or is offered with concentration on state history or geography.

Although electives in high school social studies often include disciplinary subjects, a significant number and variety of them involve multidisciplinary content. These almost consistently half-year courses focus on such content as one of the major cultural regions of the world, international relations, law, or conservation (4, 11, 18).

There are additional noteworthy, but infrequent, offerings of a multidisciplinary nature in secondary social studies. Various elective courses involve a concern with international relations. Such an elective course as conservation overlaps the field of science. And the required U.S. history course sometimes appears as "American Studies" or by other means extends to include study of American literature. Multidisciplinary approaches seem now well-established in secondary social studies despite variations and even disagreements as to preferable specific courses.

It is noteworthy that about half of the current curriculum projects embrace a multidisciplinary approach. And even some of those focused on particular disciplines utilize some content from other subjects. Thus it appears clear that multidisciplinary social studies are likely to continue for the foreseeable future (9).

### **Current Affairs and Controversial Issues**

Additional types of social studies content sometimes receive multidisciplinary treatment. As often dealt with, however, current affairs and controversial issues may more accurately be characterized as nondisciplinary in treatment. That is, they may consist simply of current descriptions or opinions from sources other than the social sciences (22, 23).

Little research has been done on the teaching of current events. Such hard evidence as is available suggests that current affairs instruction is often separated from the regular content of social studies, which potentially furnishes background for better understanding of present events. This results from the widespread and convenient, but ~~perhaps~~ unfortunate, practice of lumping current events into one day a week, or the first few minutes of a class period. Content of current events lessons often is a hodge-podge of unrelated, unsubstantiated, and unsound trivia mixed with important but inadequately treated phenomena. Teachers could well attempt more effective use of current affairs for motivation, illustration, and enrichment of regular topics in social studies courses (11).

Hopefully, more research will deal with the teaching of controversial issues. Investigation disconcertingly reveals that the social studies often preach against while practicing indoctrination, especially that toward social conformity. Many teachers, and even school officials and citizens generally, profess to desire objectivity in instruction on social studies topics. But the majority, especially in the latter two groups, express belief that such attitudes as "the superiority of the American way of life" should also be taught. Various pressure groups have been identified as discouraging or precluding, even at the state level, instruction on certain controversial topics. And teachers have been discovered sometimes to lack interest, information, desire, and tact sufficient to improve teaching of social issues (11, 21).



Some of the research on controversial issues has attempted to develop more satisfactory approaches to teaching such subject matter. One outstanding study involves a "jurisprudential" (analytical case study) approach with multidisciplinary subject matter (23). "Reflective" approaches to current affairs also have been furthered by research. Such carefully developed approaches appear to have strong potential for improving treatment of controversial issues in social studies (5, 20, 21, 22).

## METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Probably because of its more tangible nature, content has constituted a major concern of researchers in social studies. But attention to method has grown during the past few years, and some seemingly promising approaches to teaching and learning have emerged.

Skills traditionally stressed in social studies have included chiefly those involved in gathering, organizing, and presenting information—lingual or communications skills. Responsibility for developing some of these skills is shared with other curriculum areas. Other skills, such as reading social studies materials, applying problem-solving and critical-thinking skills to social issues, interpreting maps and globes, and interpreting time and chronology, are chiefly the responsibility of social studies teachers. Increasingly, provisions for sequential development of skills are built into plans for social studies programs.

Several investigations of thinking in elementary school children suggest that appropriate teaching strategies can lead students to master the abstract and symbolic forms of thought much earlier and more systematically than could be expected if this development were left solely to the accidents of experience or to less appropriate strategies. Other investigators have found, however, that qualifications and limitations do apply to children's progress in the learning of specific skills. It has been suggested that teachers assess each child's level of development in order to provide the maximum appropriate learning experiences (5, 9, 21, 29).

Various current curriculum projects, experimental programs, and curriculum revisions embrace a broader variety of skills, particularly those engaging students in *discovery* or *inquiry* techniques of learning. Although these terms are sometimes loosely and

often variously used, they both emphasize inductive learning in contrast to the deductive approach that has so heavily predominated in social studies.

There is increasing emphasis on development of study techniques that parallel research methods employed by social scientists. Most stressed thus far are techniques of case study, document interpretation, and simulation (games). Each of these methods has been demonstrated to have significant values when carefully used with experimental groups of students. These values include, beyond the learning of worthwhile study skills, considerable comprehension of content and an unusual degree of student involvement in the process of learning.

A full, literal use of inductive method in learning requires original (or at least near-to-first-hand) sources of data. Interpretations as well as original sources, however, are employed in some reflective or inquiry approaches. Most developers of these approaches stress the importance of defining carefully the problem or scope of inquiry, of choosing pertinent and valid questions to seek answers to, and of applying principles of rational reasoning or critical thinking to appropriate evidence and interpretations. Research on inquiry and reflective thinking furnishes welcome aid to teachers in developing students' intellectual skills and social outlook while using any of the several instructional resources (8, 21, 22, 27).

Several limitations have interfered with efforts to find the most effective methods of instruction. As in other areas of the curriculum, methods in social studies are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to isolate from the complex of factors affecting learning, and thus it is practically impossible to detect their influence. A problem arises also simply in identifying particular methods of teaching and learning. Practices in schools and teacher education often involve imprecise and inconsistent identification of instructional methods. Class discussion, oral reports, and lectures indicate the range of procedures rather than standard patterns.

There seems some likelihood of improving the identification of instructional methods, however, through such research as that reported by B. Othanel Smith and Milton O. Meux. They categorize logically various specific acts of teaching observed in a variety of classrooms. Their categories include such verbal acts

of teaching as logical operations (defining, classifying, explaining, inferring, comparing, valuating, and designating), directive actions, and admonitory acts, as well as nonverbal performative actions (demonstration) and expressive behavior (21, 22)

A comparable approach has been applied by some other researchers specifically to social studies. Oliver and Shaver distinguish three areas of actions in the classroom: affective, procedural, and task. The latter area is further analyzed as including the logical purposes and specific types of statements made in classroom dialogue, the speaker's general approach to information being communicated, and such intellectual operations as differentiating problems, testing for relevance, and choosing strategies for discourse. This experimentation showed certain values for a modified Socratic style of teaching composed of selected logical operations and verbal acts (23).

Such research as the foregoing studies should aid greatly in identifying tangibly and specifically, and then improving, the effectiveness of learning and teaching. These studies and some others have contributed to fuller and more definite identification of skills that social studies seek to develop. Analyses of recent years have identified especially the cognitive or intellectual skills. Various studies imply that skills range from simpler to more complex types of thinking in some such sequence as the following: identifying, describing, classifying, explaining, generalizing, qualifying, differentiating, and predicting.

More research will be needed to verify or modify that selection of intellectual acts, but it may meanwhile stimulate the thoughts and practices of teachers. Research does suggest, in general, that (a) instructional methods designed for specific purposes appear to be the most effective for developing increased proficiency in the use of social studies skills and (b) methods that use inquiry or discovery procedures seem to produce adequate understanding of content as well as improvement in cognitive skills (21, 29). And the possibility now appears that sound and definite sequences for development of social studies skills may be achieved.

Recent research on social studies has reinforced earlier findings that a variety of approaches and procedures is desirable. Current efforts are broadening the range of sound and workable

teaching and learning procedures employed. Still, there seems relatively little attention in social studies instruction and research to skills of social action: learning through work experience, travel, viewing of informational programs on commercial television, or participation in out-of-school organizations for the young or adults. It may be that the social studies potentially have a good many practical values or applications to out-of-school life that are seriously neglected in most present programs.

Recent research has given limited attention to evaluation of students' learning. While few studies have stressed evaluation, many have included the careful use and sometimes the construction of instruments for appraisal of learning. Some refinements have been introduced into well-established verbal testing procedures of both objective and subjective types (11). Facets of learning directly relatable to social studies instruction (more specifically than verbal skills) and to a variety of critical thinking skills, personality factors, and values and attitudes have been identified (21, 26, 29). Currently, there is significant emphasis on development of nonverbal and semiverbal techniques for measuring the social learning of young children and disadvantaged students (9). Perhaps the most practical implication of research on evaluation is the evidence that serious and persistent effort by teachers usually results in improved means of appraising students' learning.

## **MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**

A considerable number of researchers have investigated learning resources in social studies. Changes over the past few years in the contents and uses of instructional materials, however, remain largely uninvestigated. Still, research has contributed several worthwhile findings (11, 17, 21).

### **Textbooks**

More of the research on materials concerns textbooks than any other type of material, and a good many studies of textbooks concentrate more on their contents than on their nature, uses, or effectiveness (4, 11, 22). Admittedly, textbooks fairly accurately reflect as well as extensively determine the curriculum's

contents. Evidence shows that textbooks continue to increase in size and improve in several qualitative characteristics; but they also continue to have deficiencies in accuracy, adequacy, and suitability for instructional use. Textbook content is often so bland or neutral as to elicit little real interest from students; and frequently its treatment of any topic so brief as to contribute little to depth of study. By the very fact of publication for a nationwide market, a textbook can scarcely be expected to fit the variations in reading levels, cultural backgrounds, and other characteristics of diverse students in varying locales.

Research reporting common instructional uses of textbooks hardly presents a more heartening report. Somehow, teaching techniques from a time when school students had little or no material besides a text persist. In an era of extensive sources of information on society, textbooks are still used almost exclusively. But their basic characteristics point toward their greater values in introducing or summarizing study or for reference. For this and other reasons, the role of the textbook seems to be changing, although this conclusion is not yet well-documented by research. Doubtless, its use will continue to decline, at least relatively, as other types of resources are used more and more.

## **Other Instructional Media**

A growing number and variety of printed materials, in addition to textbooks, deal with social topics. They include material for the public, as well as that specifically intended for school use and, therefore, often written for particular school levels. The supply exceeds the ability of a teacher to "keep up with it" on a practical basis. Newspapers, magazines, paperback books, pamphlets, and a variety of library books constitute an overwhelming abundance of materials. Somewhat more printed material is coming to be used in social studies classes, although certainly not as fast as the available supply is increasing (11, 21, 22).

Programed materials in social studies are thus far largely limited to books or booklets dealing with limited portions of typical curriculum content. Simulation materials have appeared that relate to but chiefly extend beyond emphases in the present curriculum. Both of these newer types of printed materials are

scarcely beyond the experimental stage; studies generally show that they achieve some successful results but rarely replace entirely the older types of resources. Experimenters often encourage others to use the new materials only after cautious selection.

Audiovisuals continue to expand in availability and rate of use in social studies. Despite the advances of technology, however, the supply to an individual teacher is often restricted by such factors as inadequate budgets and limited efforts devoted to identifying and securing appropriate materials. Some newer types and forms of instructional media have come into use, including transparencies for overhead projection, motion picture films that treat a limited subject in depth rather than survey a broad area, and film loops (sometimes called "single concept" films). Users often testify enthusiastically, although little research has assessed the relative values of these materials (11, 21).

A sizable body of research on educational television has accumulated. However, most of it is not specifically or extensively concerned with social studies. It does seem apparent that students achieve at least informational learning through TV. Incisive critics, however, point out that TV viewing is at least as passive as reading and that the presentation of even a pretty "talking face" hardly attains the potential of television for depicting the realities of the social world. As of this writing, prospective changes in the copyright law and the advent of the Public Broadcast Laboratory and National Public Television suggest that social studies may be approaching an era when TV will open much of social reality to classroom viewing and appraisal.

The use of local or community resources for social studies seems to have suffered some decline. Particularly less frequent are field trips by classes; the inconvenience, legal liability, and the alternative of television have made them less popular. Little research now deals with them (11).

Teacher-prepared content materials in social studies (beyond procedural guides to study) are increasingly encouraged by some authorities. Preparing them may stimulate the professional development, or aspirations, at least, of teachers (9). Research has yet to reveal whether their effectiveness is sufficient to warrant substituting them for professionally developed and commercially distributed instructional materials that are available on almost all aspects of society.

Generally, research on instructional media in social studies supports the practice of using a variety of resources. Almost all types lead to some learning. Research may help to develop more discriminating assessment of the relative values of varying types and uses of specific materials. But it is difficult to isolate the influence of particular instructional resources on learning of significant breadth and nature. Teachers may do well, in selecting materials, to depend considerably on their judgments and those of specialists regarding the characteristics of the resources themselves. Even this is no small undertaking. Evidence suggests that the cooperative efforts of media specialists and teachers in a school system will be needed to keep abreast of the burgeoning production of printed materials and to select what is most appropriate for their students and curriculum.

### **TEACHERS AND CURRENT CHANGE IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

Research on social studies teachers has understandably concentrated more on the secondary than on the elementary level. It reveals that except for subject interests and training, teachers of social studies have characteristics quite similar to those of teachers in other fields. Surprisingly, perhaps, the former seem to have about the same range of social viewpoints and majority opinions as other teachers. They engage in political, civic, and social service activities little more than other teachers (1, 11, 28). Thus, the specialists in social studies collectively appear limited in their unique traits. But such studies often concentrate on general rather than highly specialized characteristics of teachers.

Typically, prospective teachers of social studies take at least introductory courses in each of several social sciences. Most commonly they take advanced work in at least one discipline—usually history, especially of the United States. Only a minority of social studies teachers teach a single subject. The majority probably spend most of their time teaching subjects other than the one they have the most formal training in. A significant number of persons trained chiefly in other fields have part or all of their teaching assignments in social studies. This situation has often been criticized (11, 19, 22). Such evidence suggests the need for continuing efforts to improve teaching assignments and to en-

courage prospective and experienced teachers to gain some realistically needed breadth of background in the social sciences. To date, little research has reported results of assigning particular teachers to social studies in the elementary grades.

Many of the investigations, experiments, and projects in social studies lend support to the theory that the teacher plays a key role, often the most determinative one, in instruction. Research has given little support to the practicability of "teacher-proof" materials. Thus, objective evidence as well as professional judgment enhances the opportunity and increases the responsibility of the teacher.

Current developments also involve a prospective shift in the major role of the teacher. No longer does it seem practicable for the teacher to be solely an expert in the subject matter his students pursue. The tremendous explosion of knowledge, the multiplicity of learning resources, and the shifting demands on today's learners call upon the teacher to assume a diagnostic, stimulative, catalytic, guiding, and coalescing role. The teacher's task becomes one of ascertaining students' levels of learning and leading them to appropriate multiple learning resources. Thus, the teacher guides students to broader and advanced learning, recognizing that each individual varies in the time required to comprehend particular concepts and develop particular skills.

### **Current Projects**

Current curriculum projects include both those that are focused on individual disciplines in the social sciences and others that are multidisciplinary in approach. Although the reports and results of these projects are not yet fully available, a number of emphases have become evident. To the extent that the projects succeed in changing the social studies curriculum, the program of the future will give greater stress to the following elements:

1. Structured insight into society
2. Selective but diverse content
3. Objective approaches in the study of society
4. Recognition of social reality
5. Skills in learning about society
6. Practical uses of social studies
7. Multiple learning resources.



Research related to current projects has indicated that children's skills in dealing with relationships involving space or time may develop at earlier ages than that at which such content is now usually taught. Studies of children's political learning, for example, report that their image of government during elementary school years may advance from attachment to individuals (authority figures) to fuller recognition of organizations, procedures, standards, and ideals (6, 10, 21, 28).

Curriculum patterns emerging from current projects include both separate study of disciplines and multidisciplinary approaches. In both cases various projects are utilizing selected basic concepts or generalizations from the social sciences. These deal with basic human problems of man or may focus on the contemporary world. Such central ideas are sometimes organized into the study of a single discipline or in combination studies that cut across two or more disciplines.

Changes in basic purposes, scope and sequence, and content can be illustrated by projects now being tried. The purpose of one program is to provide students with a "broadening knowledge of concepts and methods rather than mere factual information." Among the goals of another program is that of providing "students with an understanding of the impact of the ideological, economic, and technological forces which continually modify the interrelationship of self, group, organizations, and institutions."

Changes in grade-level studies are apparent. For example, first graders learn more about their world, including geography and history, through a series of adventure stories about Marco Polo, the Norsemen, Balboa, and Admiral Byrd. Second graders learn about forces shaping a community by making comparisons of their own life with that of the Australian aborigine and the Alaskan Eskimo. Fifth graders study conflict among groups and between groups and society as a consequence of social change.

Junior high students trace the rise of modern man from subject to citizen, as revealed in original documents and selected interpretations that present varying viewpoints. Secondary school students seek to grasp the basic nature of a discipline: the kinds of questions it seeks to answer, techniques or methodology by which answers are sought, and ways in which its findings or content are structured (interrelated among basic components). Stu-

dents may pursue the study of comparative government, economics, or (cross-disciplinary) ideologies. These examples give an incomplete but illustrative sampling of current curriculum projects and other experimental programs (8,9).

Current and emerging technological and other social changes imply that the need for improvement in social studies has never been greater, and it is still growing. Fortunately, the social studies are responsive, and the search for improvement goes on. But the remaining needs are great, among them the solution of various basic as well as current and emerging problems. Hopefully, research will contribute significantly to improvement of the changing social studies.

## SELECTED CURRENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Cited here are name of project, grade levels, location, directors (and former directors), and sponsorship, if other than USOE.

### *- Multidisciplinary, General, or Special Projects*

Basic Concepts in History and Social Science (secondary). Department of American Studies, Amherst College, Amherst, Mass. 01002. Edwin C. Roswenc. (the College).

Development of a Comprehensive Curriculum Model for Social Studies (1-8). 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, Calif. 94132. Norman E. Wallen (Hilda Taba).

Development of Guidelines and Resource Materials on Latin America (1-12). University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. Clark C. Gill and William B. Conroy.

Development of Instructional Materials Pertaining to Racial and Cultural Diversity in America (1-12). Tufts University, Medford, Mass. 02155. John S. Gibson.

Development of a Sequential and Cumulative Curriculum in the Social Studies for Able Students (9-12). Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213. Edwin Fenton.

Foreign Relations Project (secondary). North Central Association, First National Bank Bldg., Suite 832, Chicago, Ill. 60603. Jerry Moore (James M. Becker).

Greater Cleveland Social Science Program (K-12). Educational Research Council of America, Rockefeller Bldg., 615 W. Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Raymond English. (the Council).

Identification of Major Social Science Concepts and Their Utilization in Instruction Materials (5-12). Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. 13120. Roy A. Price.

A Law and Social Science Curriculum Based on the Analysis of Public Issues (7-10). Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Donald W. Oliver.

Law in American Society (4-12). 29 South LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60603. Robert H. Ratcliffe (John R. Lee). (Chicago Public Schools and Bar Association).

Preparation and Evaluation of Curriculum Guides and Sample Pupil Materials for Social Studies (K-14). College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455. Edith West.

Preparation of Teaching Guides and Materials on Asian Countries (1-12). Department of Education, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. 94720. John U. Michaelis.

A Program of Curriculum Development in the Social Studies and Humanities (1-12). Educational Development Center, 15 Mifflin Place, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Peter B. Dow (Elting E. Morrison).

A Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum Focused on Thinking Relatively About Public Issues (secondary). Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84321. James P. Shaver.

A Sequential Social Studies Course (secondary). Department of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. 61803. Ella C. Leppert.

Social Science Education Consortium (1-12). 1424 North 15th St., University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. 80304. Irving Morrisett.

Social Studies Curriculum Study Center: A Sequential Curriculum on American Society (5-12). Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. 60201. John R. Lee (Jonathon C. McLendon).

St. Louis Metropolitan Social Studies Center (K-12). Graduate Institute of Education, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. 63130. Harold Berlak (Judson T. Shaplin).

Use of a Data Storage and Retrieval System To Teach Elementary School Children Concepts and Modes of Inquiry in the Social Sciences (elementary). Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027. Bruce R. Joyce.

*Projects Emphasizing Particular Disciplines*

- Anthropology Curriculum Study Project (secondary). 5632 South Kimbark Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637. Malcolm C. Collier. (National Science Foundation).
- Conservation Education Improvement Project (K-9). College of Education. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo. 82070. Howard M. Hemmerby.
- Construction and Use of Source Material Units in History and Social Studies (secondary). Amherst College, Amherst, Mass. 01002. Richard H. Brown and Van R. Halsey, Jr.
- Developmental Economic Education Programs (K-12). Joint Council on Economic Education, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. John Maher. (various associations and groups).
- Development of Basic Attitudes and Values Toward Government and Citizenship (elementary). University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill. 60601. Robert D. Hess and David Easton.
- Development of Economics Curricular Materials (secondary). Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701. Meno Lovenstein.
- Development of a Sequential Curriculum in Anthropology (1-7). Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga. 30601. Wilfred Bailey and Marion J. Rice.
- Elementary School Economics Program (4-8). Industrial Relations Center, University of Chicago, 1225 E. 60th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637. William D. Rader.
- Elkhart, Indiana, Experiment in Economic Education (1-12). Department of Economics, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind. 47907. Lawrence Senesh. (the University, Elkhart Public Schools, and Carnegie Foundation). (Publications available from Science Research Associates.)
- Harvard-Newton Project in Business History and Economic Concepts (secondary). Newton Public Schools, Newton, Mass. 02159. Paul E. Cawein. (Harvard, Newton schools and industries).

**High School Curriculum Center in Government (9-12).** Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. 47401. Shirley H. Engle and Howard D. Mehlinger.

**High School Geography Project (secondary).** 2450 Broadway, Box 1095, Boulder, Colo. 80304. Nicholas Helburn. (National Science Foundation). (Publications available from Macmillan Co.)

**Sociological Resources (secondary).** 503 First National Bldg., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48108. Robert C. Angell (Robert Feldmesser). (National Science Foundation).

**Teaching Geography: Effects of Instruction in the Core Concept of Geographic Theory (1-3).** University of California at Los Angeles, Calif. 40524. Charlotte A. Crabtree.

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